

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06
ACDA-12 TRSE-00 AID-05 COME-00 EB-08 FRB-03
XMB-02 OPIC-03 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 STR-07 /107 W
-----007477 072053Z /63

R 071830Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY ROME
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1119
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY VIENNA
USMISSION USNATO
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GERMANY
USDOCOSOUTH

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PARIS PLEASE PASS INFO IN PGH 4 TO IRVING BROWN

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, PFOR, ELAB, IT, GW, AU
SUBJECT: STRAUSS, SUDTIROL (ALTO ADIGE) AND ITALY

1. SUMMARY. BAVARIA'S FRANZ JOSEPH STRAUSS ATTACKED EUROCOM-
MUNISM IN HIS SPEECH AS GUEST OF THE SUDTIROL PATRIOTIC AND
CULTURAL SOCIETY ("SCHUETZEN") MARCH 5. MOST LEADERS OF THE
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SUDTIROL VOLKSPARTEI (SVP) WERE PRESENT. THE NATIONAL ITALIAN
PRESS, NERVOUS AT POSSIBLE IMPLICATIONS OF STRAUSS' VISIT
FOR REVIVAL OF ETHNIC GERMAN IRREDENTISM AT ITALY'S EXPENSE,
ESPECIALLY AT THIS DELEICATE POLITICAL MOMENT IN ITALY, SUGGESTED
THAT THE VISIT GREW OUT OF COOLING OF RELATIONS BETWEEN AUSTRIA
AND SOUTH TYROLEAN NATIONALISTS, RESULTING IN THEIR TURNING
TO STRAUSS AND THE BAVARIAN CSU. UNSUBSTANTIATED RUMORS

HAVE ALSO LINKED STRAUSS' NAME TO RECENT EFFORTS TO FORM A NEW RIGHT-WING ITALIAN POLITICAL PARTY AND EUROPEAN UNION OF "AUTONOMOUS" ANTI-COMMUNIST TRADE UNIONS. END SUMMARY.

2. STRAUSS SPOKE MARCH 5 IN BOLZANO AS GUEST OF HONOR AT THE TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE RECONSTRUCTION OF THE ETHNIC GERMAN ALPINE PATRIOTIC AND CULTURAL SOCIETY "SCHUETZEN". EUROPE IS AT THE CQMROSSROADS BETWEEN CONTINUATION OF LIBERAL DEMOCRACY, FREE MARKET ECONOMY AND INDIVIDUAL LIBERTY ON ONE HAND, OR THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC ROAD TO SOCIALISM, ON THE OTHER, STRAUSS SAID. THE LATTER IS BASED ON COLLECTIVISM, WHICH STRAUSS TERMED THE COMMON MATRIX BETWEEN COMMUNISM, NAZIISM AND FASCISM. EUROCOMMUNISM IS PROBABLY A STREET WITHOUT RETURN FOR EUROPE, BECAUSE NOTHING GUARANTEES THAT COMMUNIST PARTIES ARRIVING IN POWER DEMOCRATICALLY WILL NOT FOLLOW THE PATH OF THEIR EAST EUROPEAN COMRADES, SUPPRESS LIBERTY AND INSTALL PERMANENT ONE-PARTY REGIMES. THIS, ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS, WAS THE MAJOR THEME OF STRAUSS' TALK, ALTHOUGH HE POINTEDLY REFRAINED FROM SINGLING OUT ITALY FOR COMMENT IN THIS REGARD AND WISHED ANDREOTTI WELL IN HIS EFFORTS TO FORM A GOVERNMENT. STRAUSS DEFINED HIMSELF AS LIBERAL, CONSERVATIVE, NATIONAL AND ERUOEAN, EXALTING NATIONAL PRIDE AND TRADITIONS BUT REJECTING NARROW NATIONALISM, AND URGING THAT FRONTIERS BE NOT ABOLISHED BUT RENDERED SUPERFLUOUS IN A STRONG, UNITED EUROPE.

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3. THE NATIONAL PRESS, EVIDENTLY NERVOUS THAT SOUTH TYROLEAN IRREDENTISM MAY REVIVE, AND UPSET AT ALLEGED SVP HEAVY-HANDEDNESS ON LINGUISTIC AND PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT QUESTIONS IN BOLZANO PROVINCE, COMMENTED THAT MISGIVING EXISTED EVEN AMONG SVPS AND OTHER PROMINENT ETHNIC GERMANS ABOUT THE WISDOM OF INVITING STRAUSS AT THIS DELICATE MOMENT IN ITALIAN POLITICS. THE PRESS ATTRIBUTED THE RENEWED TIES WITH STRAUSS TO A COOLING OF RELATIONS WITH AUSTRIAN POLITICIANS, WHO HAD URGED THE SOUTH TYROLEANS NC RECEPTION AN SVP DELEGATION SUBSEQUENTLY RECEIVED FROM STRAUSS.

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4. STRAUSS' NAME HAS ALSO BEEN LINKED TO INTERRELATED EFFORTS TO FORM A NEW RIGHT-WING ITALIAN POLITICAL PARTY, INCONGROUSLY ENTITLED "PARTY OF EUROPEAN SOCIAL DEMOCRACY" (PSE), AND TO UNITED DISPARATE ITALIAN INDEPENDENT ("AUTONOMOUS") TRADE UNIONS IN AN ANTI-COMMUNIST "EUROPEAN UNION OF FREE AND AUTONOMOUS TRADE UNIONS." BOTH THE PARTY, THE LEADERSHIP OF WICH INCLUDES FORMER MONARCHISTS, AND THE ABORTIVE ATTEMPT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AT UNITING ITALY'S FACTIONALIZED AUTONOMOUS UNIONS WERE LAUNCHED JOINTLY AT A CONCLAVE AT ROME'S HOTEL FLORA EARLY THIS YEAR. THEY WERE TO BE BASED ON NON-CONFLICTING "CO-PARTNERSHIP" BETWEEN CAPITAL AND LABOR, BUTTRESSED BY EMPLOYEE STOCK OWNERSHIP PLANS. IT IS ALLEGED BY FOUNDERS OF THE NEW ORGANIZATIONS, AS WELL AS SOME WHO ARE DISGRUNTLED WITH THE NEWLY ELECTED LEADERS, THAT FUNDS AND ENCOURAGEMENT FOR THESE EFFORTS COME FROM A BREAKAWAY, DISSIDENT GERMAN SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY (SDU) AND A FOUNDATION ENTITLED LUDWIG FRANK STIFTUNG. THEY ALSO HINT THAT FRANZ JOSEPH STRAUSS IS BEHIND BOTH OF THESE.

5. THE GERMAN LABOR COUNSELOR HERE, WHO TOOK PAINS TO HAVE NO CONTACT IN THE PSE ORGANIZERS, DOUBTS STRONGLY ANY STRAUSS INVOLVEMENT. HE POINTS OUT THAT THE CSU FOUNDATION, WHICH HAS AN OFFICE IN ROME, IS THE HANS SEIDEL STIFTUNG. HE HAS NEVER HEARD OF THE LUDWIG FRANK STIFTUNG.

6. COMMENT. THE SVP LEADERS ARE AMONG THOSE MOST OVERTLY WORRIED ABOUT THE PCI'S INCREASING ROLE IN GOVERNING ITALY, AS THEY HAVE MADE ABUNDANTLY CLEAR IN COOL, COGENT, RATIONAL PRESENTATIONS DURING A SERIES OF WEEKLY NATIONAL 12-PARTY TV DEBATES HELD DURING THE CURRENT POLITICAL CRISIS. SVP SPOKESMEN HAVE SUGGESTED THAT INCREASING COMMUNIST INFLUENCE IN ITALY WOULD INEVITABLY INCREASE SOUTH TYROLEAN SEPARATIST SENTIMENT. THE SVP IS A MODERATE RESPONSIBLE PARTY AND COOPERATES FAIRLY CLOSELY WITH ITALY'S RULING CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS. THE MINI-ALARM AT STRAUSS' PRESENCE IS CERTAINLY UNWARRANTED AND SHOULD BLOW OVER WITHOUT FURTHER ADO. THE NEW PARTY AND UNION COMBINE SEEM TO BE LED BY POLITICAL ADVENTURERS OF NO CONSEQUENCE AND TO BE DOOMED TO EARLY OBLIVION. HOLMES LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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